**Parent/Teacher Home Visit Program**

**Meeting Minutes**

**9-28-12**

**Attendees:** Jennifer Calder, Heather Davis Schmidt, Carol Ewen, Kari Friedman, Becky Frost, Leslie Gallant, Janet Hegedus, Kristin Kalemeyn, Sindie Kennedy, Kelly Kopitzke, Tracy Ledyard, Erica Ramsay, Michelle Stearns, Tammy Tollesen Knee.

1. Introduction of participants and program – Jennifer Calder
   1. Ice breaker activity: Think about a teacher who was influential to you. Discuss with a colleague. Everyone introduced themselves and discussed their influential teacher(s).
   2. What is PTHVP? - Jennifer discussed the model. It's a two visit model -- one in summer or fall and one in spring. Should always include two people. The spring visit doesn't have to happen, but the summer/fall is very important. It is about relationship building. No paperwork.
2. Where is MCPS with home visits - Group
   1. Report from Big Sky group – Kari Friedman - Went to conference last year with Erica Zins, Sue Black, Erica Ramsay and Debra Taylor-Cragg. Had several meetings afterwards. Considered the potential for creating a district-wide and building-level-only program. A group presented the program to the principals’ committees (Rattlesnake and Hawthorne). Washington is very interested and wants someone to present. Gave the presentation to all FRCs. This is a program that could be linked to graduation matters. Jennifer shared a research summary. The group was told last year that there wasn’t funding to support the program at the district level. Kari looked at her own budget and was able to use her own Title I funds. They have focused on transition grades. They did home visits with 25 families; 19 were completed during the summer. This summer, they chose to do 40 visits. Janet Hegedus has participated in some visits. They have completed 30 home visits so far and would like to do 10 more. The last 10 will be done with Title VII staff member. None of them have been trained in the model. Kari is relying on what she has learned on her own. She sent out a postcard at the first of the year and a postcard in the second year. She is struggling with data collection.

Anecdotally, Kari and Janet have observed an increase in parent involvement. Academically, students get to Kari’s office and ask questions, whereas, they didn’t before the home-visit program started. Kari does see more students in her office and more who want home visits. Everyone has been happy to have her make a visit. She has not had one bad experience. Parents have asked her to come back. She has observed that some parents come to the school who had never come before, and didn't feel comfortable coming into the school building. Janet reported they were well received in the homes.

Jennifer shared the core program components: home visitors need to be compensated because it is out of contract hours; visits are voluntary for staff and for families; home visitors need to be trained in the model; the focus of the first visit is on relationship-building (the “hopes and dreams” conversations); all students and families should be visited (or a cross-section) because targeting challenging students will only perpetuate the cycles of mistrust. Big Sky families are receiving the fidelity piece, which is highly important. The model includes a phone call to setup the visit and a reminder phone call the day before or on the day of (to provide an out in the event anything changes with the family). Visits should be done with a partner - for safety and to have two people in the building that families can contact (in some cases, two more than they had before the visit).

* 1. Others? – Erica Ramsay reported that home visits have been performed with C. S. Porter students. So far the visits have been negative in that they focus on attendance concerns. They would like to start doing positive home visits. Hellgate is philosophically on board. Logistically, they are not there, yet.

1. How do home visits fit in with district goals – Sindie Kennedy

Sindie suggested the Parent/Teacher Home Visit model correlates with three of the five district goals:

Achievement and graduation for all students, regardless of their circumstances or abilities;

Restructure the Organization to become more efficient, effective and accountable to support the goals of the district;

Cultivate and enhance staff, student, parent, business and community involvement.

1. Connections with Title VII – Jennifer Calder, Kari Friedman
   1. Luanne Kicking Woman in the Title VII Department has been doing home visits. She will be working with Kari to conduct additional home visits at Big Sky specifically with Native American students.
2. Sharing of strategies other schools/districts are using – Jennifer Calder
   1. Jennifer used to work with PIRC at WORD. The work has carried over through MBI and Susan Bailey-Anderson at the Institute for Educational Research and Service (IERS) at UM. Helena is doing this with all Kindergarteners. Great Falls is using the model with elementary and high schools. Fraser is doing this at the elementary and high school level. Lame Deer is in the planning phase. Poplar Middle School staff have completed 100 home school visits. They can attest to the power of the program. Some parents just want to be heard. Lewistown and Anaconda are trying to get started. There are 13 states and the District of Columbia that have embraced this model. It is considered one of a dozen promising practices in the family engagement field by the National School, Family, Community Engagement Working Group and has been spotlighted by the Harvard Family Research Project.
3. Pieces already in place – Jennifer Calder, Sindie Kennedy
   1. Let’s make a list:
4. Graduation Matters – Missoula
5. 3 schools are interested/doing visits: Russell, Big Sky and C. S. Porter. (Washington is interested in receiving more info.)
6. Support from district Title I funds
7. Wraparound project is part of the district-wide philosophy
8. Health center is in development at Lowell
9. Title I Standing Committee
10. Title VII Parent Advisory Group
11. 8-hour professional development requirement in teacher contract

Targeting doesn't necessarily mean only this student in the title classroom. It's the kids that are those with most academic need in reading and math. The Wraparound model works well with the home visit model – in meeting the whole-family needs. Both models ask parents, “What are your hopes and dreams for your children?” Heather announced a new Title I Standing Committee that will include parent and district representation from the Title I schools.

1. Possible hiccups – Jennifer Calder, Sindie Kennedy
   1. Let’s make a list:
   2. $ $ $ Funding $ $ $
   3. Collective Bargaining Agreements (classified staff and teachers are on a different salary schedule. We want to pay people the same amount.)
   4. Communication could be better
   5. Determine whether to embrace as district-wide, building-level, Title I, Graduation Matters, etc.
   6. Antiquated Parent/Teacher Conference model
   7. Time is a huge hiccup - summer time is a huge hiccup.
   8. Carol empathized that it’s important to communicate about PTHVP as though it’s part of the work that is being done already (MBI, RTI, Graduation Matters, Wraparound) rather than another whole new initiative. Could grow more from the grassroots level (instead of starting from the top) – much like Big Sky. Teachers want to have relationships with families. Don't start as a major initiative. Start with those who are passionate and want to engage. Getting teachers on board is critical (baby steps). Consider bringing Helena to Missoula for a training. There are two teachers in Helena who are doing their parent-teacher conferences on the second home visit instead of at the school
   9. Other funding options - NEA/MFT is very interested in this model, and provides some funding to support the national office. Title VII is interested. Graduation Matters mini grants might be an option. Helena Public Schools is giving there kindergarten teachers the first three days of school as hours that they can use to do home visits (either on those three days, in the summer, or in the evenings in the beginning of the year). There is also the possibility of developing a Professional Learning Community and giving teacher update hours, provided the visits were wrapped around training, readings and reflections. Pam Birkland has done something similar to this in Helena. Other schools around the country have done this as well. Jennifer can look into and share the materials developed.
2. The Denver conference – Jennifer Calder, Sindie Kennedy
   1. Who to send? Send Kari to the pre- and regular conference; send Erica Zins to the regular conference.
   2. Strategies to pay for family members to attend, etc.
3. Next steps?
   1. Identify a planning group? It was agreed that a planning group is needed. This group will meet after the conference (e.g., first Friday in November). Carol Ewen, Sindie, Jennifer – who else?
   2. Bring Sacramento trainers to Missoula? Yes. Need Sacramento group for training. Invite Head Start to participate. Sindie to contact Loren Skelton with Head Start. Jennifer will contact as well. Heather will send contact info to Sindie. The training is three hours and would likely be offered in the evening or on a weekend.
   3. What else?

Sindie to send info and meeting notes to everyone who participated and couldn’t attend. The group will have conversation next meeting to follow-up on conference and to determine next steps.

1. Additional comments, questions, etc.